

them. We could make clothes for them. Instead of shaming them, maybe we could get them to come back if we dress as poorly as they do, just with a piece of hide or fur around our waist.

And in the men's camp, Old Man said: "Maybe we should try to meet these women creatures once more. Yes, we should give it another chance. See what I did on the sly." He opened his traveling bundle in which he kept his jerk meat and other supplies, and out of it took a resplendent white buckskin outfit. "I managed to steal this when those women weren't looking. It's too small for me, but I'll add on a little buffalo hide here and a little bear fur there, and put a shield over here, where it doesn't come together over my belly. And I'll make myself a feather headdress and paint my face. Then maybe this woman chief will look at me with new eyes. Let me go alone to speak with the women creatures first. You stay back a little and hide until I have straightened things out."

So Old Man dressed up as best he could. He even purified himself in a sweat bath which he thought up for this purpose. He looked at his reflection in the lake waters and exclaimed: "Oh, how beautiful I am! I never knew I was that good-looking! Now that woman chief will surely like me."

Then Old Man led the way back to the women's camp. There was one woman on the lookout, and even though the men were staying back in hiding, she saw them coming. Then she spotted Old Man standing alone on a hilltop overlooking the camp. She hurried to tell the woman chief, who was butchering with most of the other women at the buffalo jump. For this job they wore their poorest outfits: just pieces of rawhide with a hole for the head, or maybe only a strap of rawhide around the waist. What little they had on was stiff with blood and reeked of freshly slaughtered carcasses. Even their faces and hands were streaked with blood.

"We'll meet these men just as we are," said the woman chief. "They will appreciate our being dressed like them."

So the woman chief went up to the hill on which Old Man was standing, and the other women followed her. When he saw the woman chief standing there in her butchering clothes, her skinning flint knife still in her hand, her hair matted and unkempt, he exclaimed: "Hah! Hrumph! This woman chief is ugly. She's dressed in rags covered with blood. She stinks. I want nothing to do with a creature like this. And those other women are just like her. No, I made no mistake putting these beings far away from us men!" And having said this, he turned around and went back the way he had come, with all his men following him.

"It seems we can't do anything right," said the woman chief. "Whatever it is, those male beings misunderstand it. But I still think we should unite with them. I think they have something we haven't got, and we have something they haven't got, and these things must come together. We'll try one last time to get them to understand us. Let's make ourselves beautiful."

The women went into the river and bathed. They washed and combed their hair, braided it, and attached hair strings of bone pipes and shell beads. They put on their finest robes of well-tanned, dazzling white doeskin covered with wonderful designs of porcupine quills more colorful than the rainbow. They placed bone and shell chokers around their necks and shell bracelets around their wrists. On their feet they put fully quilled moccasins. Finally the women painted their cheeks with sacred red face paint. Thus wonderfully decked out, they started on their journey to the men's camp.

In the village of the male creatures, Old Man was cross and ill-humored. Nothing pleased him. Nothing he ate tasted good. He slept fitfully. He got angry over nothing. And so it was with all the men. "I don't know what's the matter," said Old Man. "I wish women were beautiful instead of ugly, sweet-smelling instead of malodorous, good-tempered instead of coming at us with stones or bloody knives in their hands."

"We wish it too," said all the other men.

Then a lookout came running, telling Old Man: "The women beings are marching over here to our camp. Probably they're coming to kill us. Quick everybody, get your bows and arrows!"

"No, wait!" said Old Man. "Quick! Go to the river. Clean yourselves. Anoint and rub your bodies with fat. Arrange your hair pleasingly. Smoke yourselves up with cedar. Put on your best fur garments. Paint your faces with sacred red color. Put bright feathers on your heads." Old Man himself dressed in the quilled robe stolen from the women's camp which he had made into a war shirt. He wore his great chief's headdress. He put on his necklace of bear claws. Thus arrayed, the men assembled at the entrance of their camp, awaiting the women's coming.

The women came. They were singing. Their white quilled robes dazzled the men's eyes. Their bodies were fragrant with the good smell of sweet grass. Their cheeks shone with sacred red face paint.

Old Man exclaimed: "Why, these women beings are beautiful! They delight my eyes! Their singing is wonderfully pleasing to my ears. Their bodies are sweet-smelling and alluring!"

"They make our hearts leap," said the other men.

"I'll go talk to their woman chief," said Old Man. "I'll fix things up with her."

The woman chief in the meantime remarked to the other women: "Why, these men beings are really not as uncouth as we thought. Their rawness is a sort of strength. The sight of their arm muscles pleases my eyes. The sound of their deep voices thrills my ears. They are not altogether bad, these men."

Old Man went up to the woman chief and said, "Let's you and I go someplace and talk."

"Yes, let's do that," answered the woman chief. They went someplace. The woman chief looked at Old Man and liked what she saw. Old Man looked at the woman chief and his heart pounded with joy. "Let's try one thing that has never been tried before," he said to the woman chief.

"I always like to try out new, useful things," she answered.

"Maybe one should lie down, trying this," said Old Man.

"Maybe one should," agreed the woman chief. They lay down.

After a while Old Man said: "This is surely the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me. I couldn't ever imagine such a wonderful thing."

"And I," said the woman chief, "I never dreamed I could feel so good. This is much better, even, than eating buffalo tongues. It's too good to be properly described."

"Let's go and tell the others about it," said Old Man.

When Old Man and the woman chief got back to the camp, they found nobody there. All the male creatures and the women beings had already paired off and gone someplace, each pair to their own spot. They didn't need to be told about this new thing; they had already found out.

When the men and women came back from wherever they had gone, they were smiling. Their eyes were smiling. Their mouths were smiling, their whole bodies were smiling, so it seemed.

Then the women moved in with the men. They brought all their things, all their skills to the men's village. Then the women quilled and tanned for the men. Then the men hunted for the women. Then there was love. Then there was happiness. Then there was marriage. Then there were children.

—Based on four fragments dating from 1883 to 1910.